

Preparedness

Indiana Department of Homeland Security Interagency Press Release Bank



Preparedness

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All Hazards

What you should do:

- Listen to NOAA all hazards radio, commercial radio or television newscasts for safety advisories and updates on this evolving situation.
- Follow the instructions of local officials so you can protect yourself, your family and your community.
- Remember elderly neighbors and neighbors with special needs or small children who may need help. If appropriate, offer assistance if you can do so safely.
- Reserve use of phone lines and cell phones for emergency calls only.
- Remember, text messages may be easier to send and receive than phone calls. If you have an out-of-state emergency contact, that person may be easier to reach than in-state contacts that are closer to the disaster site.
- Locate your emergency kit or quickly assemble one. Remember to include a three-day supply of food, water, medications and other essentials for each family member. If available, a flashlight, portable radio and extra batteries are important items to include.

Creating a Family Emergency Plan

- Discuss with your family what types of disasters could happen in your area; understand how they will affect you and how your community will notify you of the disaster.
- Include your children in your planning, practice your plans with them and quiz them to make sure they understand what to do. Always stress that this is a “just in case” plan.
- Teach your children how to make long-distance telephone calls and how to dial 9-1-1 for emergency assistance.
- Pick two places where your family will reunite after an emergency: a place near your home and a place away from home in case you cannot return home after an emergency.
- Make sure everyone knows the addresses and phone numbers of both meeting places.
- Know and practice all possible exit routes from your neighborhood.

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- Check to make sure you have adequate insurance coverage.-Make a record of your home possessions to help you claim reimbursement in case of loss or damage. Store this information with your family records.
- Put important family records (birth certificates, healthcare records, passports, etc.) in a safe place, such as a fireproof and waterproof safe or a bank safety deposit box.
- Get a copy of your child's school or daycare emergency plans.
- Make plans for where you can meet your child after an evacuation.
- Make sure that the school has up-to-date contact information for you and other family members.
- Authorize a friend or family member to pick up your child in an emergency if you are unable to do so.
- Identify an easily accessible location in your home to store your emergency kit and make sure everyone in the home is aware of the location.
- Create an emergency contact list.-Prepare your home by installing smoke detectors on each level of your home, installing carbon monoxide detectors near sleeping areas, moving beds away from windows, clearing hallways and exits, keeping a fire extinguisher on each level and knowing how and when to use them, storing flammables/highly reactive chemicals securely and separate from each other and knowing how and when to switch off your utilities.

Creating a Family Emergency Kit

- Preparing an emergency kit can save precious time if you must evacuate or seek shelter. It may take emergency personnel up to three days to reach you; therefore, the kits should be designed for three days.
- Your kit should include: a three-day water supply (three gallons), Food which requires no preparation, refrigeration, and very little water if any; a first aid kit (latex gloves, scissors, tweezers, petroleum jelly, sterile dressings, eye wash solution, burn ointment, sunscreen, soap, bandages, over-the-counter pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids, laxatives, thermometer, prescription medications for at least one week and a list of family physicians, important medical info.).

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- You may also want to include a battery-operated or hand crank flashlight, battery-operated or hand crank radio, a cell phone with battery-operated or hand crank charger, extra batteries, wrench and/or pliers to turn off utilities, an extra set of eye glasses, whistles to signal help, blankets, ID cards, extra sets of keys, etc.

Travel Safety

- Pack essential items, such as: high protein snacks, water, first aid kit, flashlight, small battery-operated radio, an emergency contact card with names and phone numbers, extra prescription medications and important documents or info you may need.
- Let family and friends know your itinerary. Make sure family members or friends know where you will be staying and how to reach you. In a disaster situation, you can register on the Safe and Well website on www.redcross.org, so family and friends have access to this information.
- Make a plan. Find out what the disaster safety procedures are where you are staying. Identify how you would get out of the building in case you need to evacuate. Also, locate safe places inside should you need to take cover during a disaster, such as an earthquake or tornado.
- Have emergency numbers ready.
- Before you travel, learn about the area you are visiting. Find out what disasters may occur in the place where you are traveling, especially if they are disasters you have never experienced before.
- Pay attention to the forecast. Travel and weather websites can help you avoid storm seasons, severe heat and other regional challenges that could impact your safety.

Learn How to Shelter in Place

Shelter in place means to take immediate shelter where you are. It also may mean to “seal the room” or to take steps to prevent outside air from coming in. Here are some steps on how to prepare:

At home:

- Choose a room in advance for your shelter. The best room is one with as few windows and doors as possible. A large room, preferably with a water supply and telephone, is desirable. A master bedroom connected to a bathroom is an excellent choice.

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- Contact your work places, your children's school, nursing homes where you may have family and your local town or city officials to find out what their plans are for "shelter in place."
- Find out when warning systems will be tested. When tested in your area, determine whether you can hear or see sirens and/or warning lights from your house.
- Develop a family emergency plan so every family member knows what to do. Practice regularly.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit that includes emergency water and food supplies.

At work:

- Ensure that the emergency plan and checklist involve all employees. Volunteers or recruits should be assigned specific duties during an emergency. Alternates should be assigned to each duty.
- The shelter kit should be checked on a regular basis. Duct tape and first aid supplies can sometimes disappear when all employees know where the shelter kit is stored. Batteries for the radio and flashlight should be replaced regularly.

If you are told to shelter in place:

- Immediately go inside and do not leave unless you are asked to do so.
- Shut off heater and air conditioners.
- Make sure all fireplace dampers are closed.
- Go to your shelter room and cover all doors, windows and vents with 2-4 mm thick plastic sheeting.
- Cut the plastic at the corners first and then tape down the edges.
- If harmful air is leaking into your home, cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth or towel.
- Tune in to your local TV or radio stations to learn more about the emergency.
- Do not make phone calls unless they are 100% necessary, leave phone lines open for emergency organizations.
- Only call 9-1-1 if there is an injury or other immediate emergency. Do not call 9-1-1 for information on the status of the emergency.

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If you are not at home:

Follow the same steps that are appropriate for your home.

- If you are in your car, make sure you have all outside vents, windows and doors closed.
- If you are outside, cover your nose and mouth with a handkerchief or cloth. Remember the chemical is moving with the wind. Do not walk into it or with it. You should move crosswind with the wind at your side. Find shelter as soon as possible.

Know Your Neighbors

Strategies for building a strong, emergency-ready neighborhood:

- Introduce yourself to your neighbors. Emergency planning will go more smoothly once all neighbors are acquainted.
- Join your local neighborhood watch or the neighborhood safety group. If there is not one, you or someone you support could be the catalyst to get one started. Think of this as a community engagement strategy. Become an active contributor to your community.
- Take detailed notes about each neighbor's skills. Knowing who is a doctor, nurse or electrician will help the neighborhood assign post-emergency tasks to those best suited to them.
- Keep a list of neighbors with special needs. Elderly neighbors may need extra help escaping their homes after an emergency.
- Create a list of important medical conditions of children in the neighborhood. Knowing about medical conditions ahead of time will help you prioritize first-aid administration.
- Know how to turn off the utilities for your own home. Preventing fire at your house will save neighbors' homes as well.
- Host a meeting to discuss and teach others how to turn off utilities in the home after an emergency.
- Draw a neighborhood map and mark off the locations of the gas, water and electrical shutoffs for each home. Neighbors may be absent or otherwise unable to turn off their utilities themselves after an emergency.

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- Assemble an emergency preparedness kit for your own family. Encourage your neighbors to do so as well, and show them what should be included.
- Give trusted neighbors keys to your house and make sure they know how to turn off your utilities.
- Make sure neighbors have a list of important phone numbers.
- Work with your neighbors to develop a list of local shelters including schools and school gyms which are often used as temporary shelters after an emergency.
- Appoint a person who will locate and gather children from schools as necessary. Supply this person with a list of all neighborhood youths and the locations of their schools and alert school officials to the identities of all persons authorized to collect each child.
- Elect a damage-assessment team. This group of neighbors will be responsible for evaluating any potential hazards existing after the emergency and minimizing them.

Considerations for Children

Planning tips for children:

- Take the feelings of your children seriously. Children are used to their daily routines, so when emergencies or disaster interrupt this routine, children may become anxious.
- Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan how you will contact one another and what you will do in different situations. Make sure your children know how to dial 9-1-1; their name, phone number and address; how to reach parents and other family members; contact information for the family's out-of-state contact; and how to make long-distance phone calls.
- It is important to include your emergency kit items for children, such as toys, coloring books and other forms of entertainment.
- Remember baby items such as food, formula, diapers, wet wipes, etc.
- Work together with your children and quiz them when it comes to your disaster kit and plans. Make sure they understand that the plans are "just in case."
- Children watch the news and react according to the people around them. During a disaster watch your children for signs of stress and trauma.
- Adults should watch TV reports about disasters when children are busy with other things.

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Considerations for Seniors and Disabled

- Create a personal support network of family and friends who can help you in an emergency.
- Make arrangements prior to an emergency for your support network to immediately check on you after a disaster and, if needed, offer assistance.
- Exchange important keys and show where you keep emergency supplies.
- Share copies of your relevant emergency documents, evacuation plans and emergency health information card.
- Agree and practice a communications system regarding how to contact each other in an emergency. Do not count on the telephones working.
- You and your personal support network should always notify each other when you are going out of town and when you will return.
- The relationship should be mutual. Learn about each other's needs and how to help each other in an emergency.
- Plan to make it on your own, at least for a period of time. It is possible that you will not have access to a medical facility or even a drug store immediately following a disaster incident.
- If you undergo any regular medical treatments or if you require home health care services, talk to your service provider about its emergency plans.
- If you are dependent on electricity for a wheelchair or any life-sustaining device, consult your power provider.
- Keep a list of copies of important documents in your emergency kit along with phone numbers of people in your support network.
- Keep emergency cash or travelers checks on hand.
- Switching to electronic payments is one simple, significant way people can protect themselves financially before disaster strikes, if you are dependent on the mail for Social Security benefits.
- If you are vision-impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, plan ahead for someone to convey essential emergency information to you if you are not able to use the TV or radio.
- If you live in an apartment, ask management to identify and mark accessible exits and all areas designated as emergency shelter or safe rooms. Ask about plans for alerting and evacuating those with sensory or mobility disabilities.

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Considerations for Livestock

- Familiarize yourself with potential disaster risks specific to your area.
- Survey your property for the best location for animal confinement in each type of disaster. Identify food and water sources that do not rely on electricity.
- Decide where to take animals if evacuation is necessary. Contact fairgrounds, other producers, stockyards and auction markets about their policies and ability to temporarily house livestock in an emergency. Have several sites in mind, in case your first choice is unavailable.
- Familiarize yourself with several, less well traveled, evacuation routes to your destination.
- Photograph, identify (brands, ear tags, noise prints, etc.) and inventory your animals. Identify in a written list which animals are of the highest priority and most valuable in the event only some of them can be saved. Make sure others know your plans. Keep copies with other important papers.
- Keep vaccinations and boosters up to date. Record the dates, dosages and types of medications and health products the animals have received. Record dosing instructions and dietary requirements. Keep this info with your disaster plan.

Create an emergency disaster kit and include:

- Portable radio
- Extra batteries
- Animal restraint equipment
- Water bucket
- Portable generators
- First aid kit
- Stored feeds
- Flashlights
- Sharp knife
- Wire cutters
- Ropes, halters
- Bleach, lime

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During a disaster:

- If possible, evacuate your livestock early to ensure their safety and protect your investment.
- If you evacuate your livestock, take all vaccination and medical records, the emergency disaster kit and enough hay, feed and water for a minimum of 48 hours.
- Remember basic bio-security measures if your herd is under quarantine or has a communicable disease when you evacuate
- If you must evacuate without your animals, leave them in the preselected area appropriate for the disaster type. Leave enough hay, food and water for 48-72 hours. Do not rely on automatic watering systems; power may be lost.

After a disaster:

- Check fences; be sure they are intact. Check pastures and fences for sharp objects that could injure livestock and beware of downed power lines.
- Beware of wild animals that may have entered the area and could pose a danger to your animals.
- If animals are lost, contact veterinarians, human societies, stables, surrounding farms and other facilities. Listen to the emergency broadcast system for groups accepting lost animals.
- Check with your veterinarian and state board of animal health for information about possible diseases outbreaks.

Considerations for Pets

Create an emergency kit for your pet, including:

- ID collar and rabies tags.
- Current photo (in case they may be lost).
- Carrier and leash.
- Medications.
- Newspapers and plastic trash bags.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.

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- At least a three-day supply of food and water.
- Items specific for your pet, such as cat litter/pan.
- Pet bed or toys if easily transportable.

In the event of evacuation, have a safe place to take your pets:

- Local and state health and safety regulations do not permit the Red Cross to allow pets in disaster shelters. Service animals which assist people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in Red Cross shelters.
- Contact hotels and motels outside your local area to check their policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size and species. Ask if “no pet” policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of “pet friendly” places, including phone numbers, with your other disaster information and supplies. If you are alerted to an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.
- Ask friends, relatives or others outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.
- Make a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.
- Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets during a disaster. Animal shelters may be overwhelmed caring for the animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.